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The Jaipur Metro Model Muddle

It was widely reported in the media that the state cabinet approved to take the Jaipur Metro forward on public-private-partnership (PPP) model in late April 2010. However, suddenly a month and a half later, the state government has now changed its track and wishes to combine the expertise of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) with private partners for the Jaipur Metro.

The proposal has been approved by the urban development minister Shanti Dhariwal a couple of days back after discussions with officials of Union government and Asian Development Bank (ADB). The proposal will soon be sent for the state cabinet's approval. "It has been decided the DMRC shall be handed over the responsibility for the construction of the metro corridor, while the rolling stock will be developed in a PPP model. A similar model has proved effective in Delhi," said Dhariwal.



It is clear that this has been necessitated by the Chief, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), E Sreedharan – a diehard critic of the PPP model for metros across the country. In fact, he has reportedly expressed a desire to dissociate DMRC from the Jaipur Metro Rail Project if the state government proceeds with the PPP model.

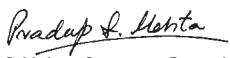
However, recent implementation of similar metro rail projects in Hyderabad and Mumbai reveals that the Planning Commission favours the PPP mode in large infrastructure projects. The state government was looking at increasing the percentage of viability gap funding from the central government. The viability gap funding is a special scheme to support financial viability of infrastructure projects that are economically justifiable but not commercially feasible in the immediate future. The viability funding scheme provides for an upfront grant of up to 20 percent of the project cost for state or central PPP projects that are being implemented by a private sector developer.

The turf war between the Planning Commission and DMRC has, at the moment, jeopardised the future of the Jaipur Metro. While the former points to the PPP model as being the most suitable, the latter expresses serious doubts on whether a private investor would be interested in a project of this magnitude due to inadequate traffic density in Jaipur. It is also being questioned as to how the state government can nominate DMRC to do part of the job without a transparent bidding process.

Given the indecision and contrary views in the matter, perhaps it is time to go back to the drawing board to re-examine whether Jaipur needs a metro or whether some alternative and cheaper mode of rapid transport such as monorail should be considered. And if metro is the way forward then to invite private sector investors to work on a PPP model. Granted that the DMRC has good experience of building and running a metro rail project in Delhi, but that is because its boss, Sreedharan was given the complete freedom to implement the project, even though today he is quite old, over 78 years of age. We cannot create another Sreedharan here to implement the project, and we may land up with another Bisalpur-style project whose costs and time period over ran hugely.

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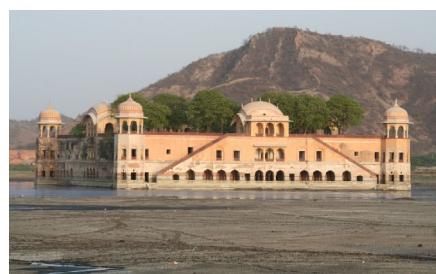
The Unquenched Thirst

The Bisalpur Water Supply Project with an estimated Phase I cost of Rs 556 crores, hailed as a panacea for all water ills of a thirsty Jaipur, having failed to take off has plunged the city into a deep crisis this summer season. Bisalpur dam has water till the second week of July 2010. "After that everything is in the hands of God" reportedly laments the Additional Chief Engineer of Ajmer.

Jal Mahal, Jaipur



Then



Now

Kesar Kyari Bagh, Jaipur



Then



Now

One can not but recall the prophetic analysis of Jim Wright, US Representative, The Coming Water Famine in 1966 "The crisis of our diminishing water resources is just as severe... as any wartime crisis we have ever faced. Our survival is just as much as stake as it was at the time of Pearl Harbour..." Jaipurites have taken to the streets often blocking roads and highways demanding potable water and the efforts for supplying the same not being satisfactory is resulting in skirmishes and law and order problems everyday across the city. The acute water crisis in the state may trigger migration of people, says a study conducted by the state government.

Attention is now focused on the recently framed water policy that seeks to tap the remaining resources. This new water policy presents the framework for sustainable development and management of water resources in the state. It focuses towards community-level empowerment and responsibility for water management. The objectives of the state water policy are to adopt a integrated and multi sectoral approach to the water resources planning, development and management on a sustainable basis taking river basin/sub basin as unit; and plan, develop and manage water resources of the state with a river basin and sub basin as the unit adopting multi sectoral approach and treating surface and sub surface water with unitary approach.

Various measures initiated to tackle the problem are:

- Formation of an autonomous body 'Jaipur Water Supply and Sewerage Company' which would provide water supply infrastructure and the Jaipur Municipal Corporation would exercise direct control over it.
- Working with the European Commission to find more water sources and better conservation efforts with technology upgradation.
- Appealing to all departments and residential complexes to install rain water harvesting system in their buildings.
- Signing of a pact by the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) with a Malaysian aqua firm, Ranhill and EcoWater Asia Forum. This involves training of officials in Malaysia and Maharashtra to contain pilferage.
- Outsourcing a survey to Ramky Enviro Engineers Ltd., New Delhi to benchmark urban and rural water/irrigation schemes and to make an inventory of all water sources on Geographical Information System coordinates.
- Improving supply side management by reducing distribution losses and non revenue water, and demand side management by rationalising tariffs, institutional restructuring etc.
- Restructuring the water supply system which would be carried out by the *panchayats*, municipalities or by other bodies under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) scheme. The state would only be responsible for bulk water supply.
- Creating a Water Regulatory Authority for which the state is currently studying the Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh model, besides ensuring a water audit along the Maharashtra pattern.

The eyes of the Jaipurites, however, for immediate relief remain affixed with that of the Additional Chief Engineer, Ajmer on the skies above praying for a normal monsoon to quench their parched throats.

Low-floor Buses on BRTS

Jaipur City Transport Services Limited (JCTSL) will soon introduce 21 low-floor buses in the city. The buses will run between *Mansarovar* and *Dadi ka Phatak* passing through *Gopalpura Bypass*, *Tonk Phatak*, *Rambagh Circle*, *SMS Hospital*,



Sanganeri Gate, *Badi Chaupar*, *Chhoti Chaupar*, *Chandpole*, *Pital Factory*, *Shastri Nagar*, *Vidyadhar Nagar* and *Muralipura*.

The 21 low-floor buses will ply on the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) corridor on Sikar road where the buses will run without any hurdle. The JCTSL has taken stock of the corridor and all required facilities will be provided for smooth transportation.

At present, JCTSL is plying 47 buses in Jaipur, out of which 22 are plying on *Pratap Nagar* to *Khirani Phatak* route, while 25 are on the *Sanganer-Amer* route.

(RP, 02.04.10)

Tech Upgrade for City Buses

The bus services in the city are set for a major technological upgradation. The new transport system will be equipped with electronic tracking devices and computerised support. The JCTSL opened technical bids received from private parties for IT upgradation. It is expected to start in the next six months.

A robust management system will ensure that the passengers have to spend less time waiting for buses. Services like conductor-less ticketing will further improve the riding experience. The JCTSL has received funding for 400 buses under the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). 95 such buses have already been acquired by the company. More such buses are expected to be deployed from May 01, 2010.

(Tol, 16.04.10)

FTTH Services for Jaipur

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is going to launch 'fibre to the home' (FTTH) in Jaipur. This ground breaking service was recently launched in Hyderabad which provides flawless high speed connectivity as FTTH is based on ring based optical fibre network.

FTTH is helpful for apartments because it replaces the need for installing copper lines. Moreover, it is a self-healing network. In the event of the optical fibre being damaged, information will be re-routed through another line.

FTTH is more reliable to facilitate interactive gaming, IPTV, HDTV, 3DTV, video on demand, bandwidth on demand, LAN, VOIP service and video conferencing. With FTTH, BSNL can now offer high speed internet access up to 1000 Mbps and abundant services based on voice, video, and data.

(www.cellbharat.com, 13.03.10)

New Airport Overcomes 150-km rule

A proposed airport near Jaipur could become the country's first to come up within 150 km of an existing airport, and overcomes the government's stated policy of not allowing another airport within 150 km of an existing one.

The proposed airport is to come up at Viratnagar, 63 km from Jaipur and 167 km from the Delhi airport. It got the approval as the existing airport is constrained to expand, and is likely to be saturated by 2013-14. This is despite a new terminal it added recently.



The new Jaipur airport could also be India's first no-frills airport that could offer faster landing and lower parking and refuelling charges. Since it will largely cater to cargo, the airport does not plan to add any frills like air-conditioning, LCD panels, expensive lounges, etc.

(BS, 25.03.10)

Saving Trees by Replanting

Setting an example of tree conservation, environmentalists in Jaipur are replanting century old uprooted trees through a special technique at the Jaipur-Delhi express highway, which is being converted to six-lane.



As a part of the *Jal Mahal* Replantation Project, around nine huge size trees have been brought to the banks of *Mansagar Lake* at *Jal Mahal* Palace to replant them out of which five have already been planted. Experts opine that the roots of the trees are given a hormonal treatment so that it can germinate.

The main aim behind this exercise is to conserve as much greenery as possible, which is vanishing in the name of development. (DB, 27.04.10)

Multi-level Parking Projects

Three major parking projects worth over Rs 160 crore were inaugurated in Jaipur. They will provide parking facilities to around 3,000 vehicles. The three projects are a 2,000 vehicle capacity underground parking at the *Ramleela Ground*, a 500 vehicle parking at *Ashok Marg* culvert and another 500 vehicle parking near *Panch Batti*.



The projects are being promoted by the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) and will be developed on PPP basis. Parking has been a major issue in the fast-growing Jaipur city. Even as the population of the city has been growing by six percent, the number of registered vehicles has increased by 12 percent annually.

Additionally, work on four multi-level parking proposed at *Atish Market*, *Chandpole Anaj Mandi*, and *Government Hostel* and near *Singhdwar* also to be developed on a PPP module by the JMC is expected to generate an additional parking space for 5,400 four-wheelers. (Tol, 12.04.10)

Briefs

Jaipur Discom Plugs its Losses

If you have been enjoying uninterrupted power supply to your home and establishments, it is because of power distribution company's efficiency in reducing losses in transmission. Latest records from the energy ministry point out that Jaipur's distribution company has fared better. As per records, transmission losses in Jaipur Discom are around 20 percent. This means that one-fifth of the power is lost to operational glitches and thefts.

A senior Jaipur Discom official said that every unit of electricity saved is equivalent to an additional unit generated. "In past five years we have reduced distribution losses from 38 to 20 percent; this has added to our capacity to power more villages and continue uninterrupted supply in the cities", he said. According to sources, energy distribution efficiency in Jaipur is better than major cities like Delhi and Ahmedabad where power distribution is being managed by private companies.

(DNA, 10.04.10)

Jaldhara: A Destination for Tourists

In order to conserve nature and to make the city beautiful, attractive and charming, the Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) has developed a wonderful water fountain 'Jaldhara' in Jaipur.



Jaldhara fountain's height is around 40 ft. and it is half KM long is specially designed to appear natural. The area is surrounded by trees and artificial rocks. Elegant sign boards instruct visitors to take care of Jaldhara and to keep it green and clean. Jaldhara water is recyclable.

Other attractions like dolphin statues, cages for artificial birds, artificial crocodiles and tortoises, two lighting fountains are endearing. (DB, 13.04.10)

JMC Clears Encroachments

Following the High Court order's to free city roads of all encroachments, the JMC removed illegal structures from the *Collectorate Circle to Government Hostel Road* in the first phase of enforcement drive. The cell removed shops adjoining the temple near the Circle and illegally constructed shops in Crystal Mall.

Further, it also seized construction material lying on the road and cleared kiosks set up outside *Ganpati Plaza*. Freeing the encroached government land from make-shift fast food joints, the cell demolished the unauthorised steps and parking constructed outside hotels.

The illegal kiosks which sold and booked tickets of private bus operators, were also removed. During the drive, the authority recovered the Rs 22,000 as carrying charge. (DB, 23.03.10)

Jaipur to Get Piped Natural Gas

Jaipur has been selected for distribution of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) through pipeline in the next five years. According to Union Petroleum Minister Murli Deora, though his ministry had set a target of completing the task by 2015, it is expediting the project.

The towns, other than Jaipur selected for distribution, are Bharatpur, Alwar, Neemrana, Jaisalmer, Udaipur, Bhilwara, Bhiwadi, Sriganganagar, Jodhpur and Ajmer.

On the eve of the launch of the Rajiv Gandhi Rural LPG Dealership Distribution, the minister reiterated that there would be no rollback on the prices of the petroleum products announced in the Union budget as the oil companies continue to bear a huge cost in the form of subsidy. (RP, 13.03.10)

Transition to a World-class City

By year 2013 Jaipur would be more accessible and accommodating for its residents. The biggest and the most expensive undertakings for infrastructure development and city's expansion are lined up for completion by 2013 making it a horizon year for Jaipur's transition into a city with world-class amenities.

The year 2013 will see the introduction of Metro rail as the fastest way of public transport in Jaipur. The largest underground space for car

parking at Ramlila ground would take 3,000 cars off MI Road. And, the first tunnelled road through the hills at *Ghat ki Guni* would open up the city to its suburb – the New Jaipur.

Among other biggies, which are proposed to get completed by 2013 is the largest convention-cum-habitat centre of Rajasthan on the Jawaharlal Nehru Marg and the first three-level flyover at Transport Nagar. (Tol, 24.04.10)

Transport Nagar Flyover on Anvil

The under construction flyover at Transport Nagar is expected to be completed by September 2010. Jaipur Development Commissioner Sudhansh Pant, visited the site and called for its completion before the Commonwealth Games in 2010.

The flyover will connect traffic arriving from Delhi Highway (NH8) to MI Road at the *Transport Nagar* crossroads. Work on another underpass and second highway is expected to be completed by June 2010. (DB, 25.03.10)

Nod for Erecting Mobile towers

Cellphone companies can once again install communication towers in areas that come under the Jaipur municipal limits. The Rajasthan High Court modified its order that had banned installation of cellphone towers on buildings or plots across the city, in December 2009.

Cellphone companies were allowed to install towers in strict compliance with the rules laid down by the state disaster management and relief department. On December 07, 2009, the court had banned installation of mobile towers after a resident of city's Durgapura area filed a petition stating that cellphone companies were ignoring public health by recklessly installing communication towers.

Shortly thereafter, the state government went a step further and completely banned installation of communication towers all over Rajasthan. However, earlier in 2010 the towers were allowed to come up in rest of the state, but the ban continued in Jaipur municipal areas. (DB, 24.04.10)

Sources: BS: Business Standard; DB: Dainik Bhaskar; DNA: Daily News & Analysis; RP: Rajasthan Patrika; Tol: Times of India